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Message Text

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21
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 4330

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD
GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, UR, IZ
SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEWS ON IRAQ-IRAN RELATIONS

REF: A. MOSCOW 4243, B. BAGHDAD 216

1. DURING TOUR D' HORIZON ON MIDDLE EAST SITUATION ON
MARCH 26 (REFTEL A) MFA DEPUTY CHIEF NEAR EAST COUNTRIES
DEPARTMENT PYRLIN COMMENTED POSITIVELY BUT WITHOUT ENTHUSIASM
ON THE RECENT IRAQ-IRAN AGREEMENT TO IMPROVE BILATERAL RE-
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LATIONS. HE SAID THE SOVIETS CONSIDER THE AGREEMENT AN

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"IMPROTANT STEP," ALTHOUGH MOSCOW DOES NOT HAVE A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT WHAT THE SHAH AND SADDAM HUSSEIN AGREED TO AT ALGIERS. THE USSR, HE SAID, WELCOMES STEPS TO EASE IRAQI-IRANIAN TESNIONS, AND THE SOVIET AMBASSADORS IN TEHRAN AND BAGHDAD HAD CONVEYED TELEGRAMS OF CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SHAH AND PRESIDENT BAKR PRAISING THE AGREEMENT.

2. IN DISCUSSION OF OTHER MATTERS, PYRLIN ALSO MENTIONED IN PASSING THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PRESENTLY WORKING OUT DATES IN APRIL FOR A VISIT TO MOSCOW BY IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT SADDAM HUSSEIN (REFTEL B). HE DID NOT, HOWEVER, MENTION OF SADDAM'S VISIT TO HIS COMMENTS ABOUT THE IRAQ-IRAN AGREEMENT.

3. COMMENT: PYRLIN'S ALMOST APATHETIC ASSESSMENT OF THE IRAQ-IRAN ACCORD IS CONSISTENT WITH THE MINISCULE PRESS COVERAGE THE SOVIETS HAVE GIVEN THE ALGIERS AGREEMENT AND THE IMPROVEMENT IN IRAQI-IRANIAN RELATIONS. SOME OF MOSCOW'S RETICENCE ABOUT THE IRAQI-IRANIAN RAPPROACHEMENT CAN PROBABLY BE PUT TO THE SOVIETS' APPARENT TOTAL EXCLUSION FROM A ROLE AS MID-WIFE. HOWEVER, WE SUSPECT THAT THERE MAY BE DEEPER SOVIET CONCERNS ABOUT THE NEGATIVE EFFECT AN IMPROVEMENT IN IRAQI-IRANIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS CAN HAVE ON SOVIET RELATIONS WITH IRAQ. REDUCTION IN IRAQI-IRANIAN TENSIONS AND BAGHDAD'S APPARENT SUCCESS IN DEALING WITH THE KURDISH REBELLION (IN A MANNER WHICH MOST REPORTS INDICATE MOSCOW HAS OPPOSED) WIL ALMOST CERTAINLY REDUCE TWO OF MOSCOW'S MAJOR SOURCES OF LEVERAGE WITH BAGHDAD.

4. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INDICATION BAGHDAD MAY PROVIDE ABOUT THE LINE SADDAM HUSSEIN IS LIKELY TO TAKE IN HIS TALKS WITH THE SOVIETS.
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